

A VISION OF THE INTERSTATE 95 CORRIDOR IN THE YEAR 2020

The Interstate 95 travel corridor forms the spine of the Boston - Washington megalopolis (also known as Northeast Corridor). This immense urban area houses 70 million people. The financial, cultural, educational, medical, industrial, government, and historic resources located in this corridor contribute to a staggering concentration of wealth. The area is fortunate to have a healthy tourism industry supported by the region's mountains, forests, beaches, and other natural resources.

It is within this context that the vision for Rhode Island's **core** Interstate Corridor, which includes I-95, I-195, I-295 and Route 10, is of a highway system that is **regionally planned** fluidly connecting Rhode Island to both Connecticut and Massachusetts and beyond. The I-95 Corridor is the major element of a **multi-modal system** that effectively integrates the movement of commercial goods (freight) and people both within and through the State via a seamless system of highway, bus, rail, air and water transportation optimizing its geographical and infrastructural resources. **Congestion is alleviated as a result of increased transportation options, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), road design and access management.** Local, short trip use of the Interstate highway system is decreased.

This Corridor's land-use and transportation needs complement each other showcasing Rhode Island's **diverse range of natural and man-made attributes** and its unique capacity to utilize these resources effectively while preserving aesthetic quality. Changes in the **property tax system eliminate the reliance on commercial development to fund local budgets. Stricter zoning guidelines** for interchange areas, protects each community's **distinctive character**. Redundant big-box development and residential **sprawl is controlled**. All large developments are assessed through a **regional impact analysis**. Local communities place a high value on **retaining community character and controlling sprawl through growth management techniques**.

Development is encouraged in the cities and small town centers within the corridor. Westerly, Kingston, Wickford Junction, East Greenwich, Warwick Providence, and Pawtucket, are well designed, multi-functioning multi-modal **Transportation Oriented Developments**. These TODs are mixed-use with high-density development, realizing the efficiencies and economies of scale of integrating work and living space in close proximity to transportation options. **Economic development is thriving** in the older towns designated as growth centers as well as the new TODs with conveniently located amenities and services.

Rhode Island's five Interstate entrances in Cumberland, Hopkinton, Pawtucket, East Providence, and at TF Green are attractive, welcoming **Gateways**. **Enhanced signage** throughout the State better guides all users. This sets the tone for a visually pleasing driving experience through the corridor that includes an interesting and aesthetically pleasing landscape traversing the rural, suburban and urban character of this Corridor

GOALS FOR I-95 CORRIDOR

- ✓ **Reduce congestion in the I-95 Corridor** through a combination of **upgraded multi-modal transportation options, travel demand management, and limited capacity enhancements**.
 - Integrate the Interstate Corridor with enhanced air, water, rail and bus linkages.
 - Invest in commuter rail infrastructure in as many communities as is practicable and support the North South rail link in Boston.
 - Use travel demand management techniques such as transit incentives, parking disincentives, and telecommuting.
 - Consider capacity expansion projects such as new travel lanes on I-295 between Routes 6 and the I-95 merge.
 - Expedite the I-95 and Route 4 interchange project.
- ✓ **Improve driver information and education through the use of ITS. Advertise Ozone Alert Days on variable message boards.**
- ✓ **Increase safety** by continually evaluating the relationship between **accident data and road design**.
- ✓ **Use Access Management to evaluate interchange intervals** as a means to **limit the misuse of the Interstate** as a local, short-trip roadway.
- ✓ **Improve signage** making travel within Rhode Island safer and more enjoyable by:
 - **Welcoming travelers to Rhode Island at the four** Interstate Gateway locations.
 - **Informing travelers of** alternative transportation modes, safe driving practices, and publicize attributes such as recreational opportunities, colleges, historical sites, shopping, entertainment, and business districts.
 - **Providing “warning signage”** that prepares users for irregularities such as left exits, low overpass clearance height, truck climbing lanes and highway curvatures that require speed reductions.
- ✓ **Increase safety through a positive guidance system of lighting, imbedded reflectors, signing, and striping** that increases the driver’s expectations and understanding of unfamiliar highways thereby **decreasing the number of accidents and fatalities along this Corridor**.
- ✓ **Maintain and vary lighting** considering both safety and the environmental impact that **over-lighting** (light pollution) can cause in sensitive rural areas. Interstate lighting needs to accommodate both safety and the environmental requirements of respective urban and rural communities.
- ✓ **Understand the economic opportunity of interchanges and** encourage “good” development that maximizes the economic benefits of the existing infrastructure while minimizing sprawl and environmental impacts. Local communities must consider interchange development as an **asset and encourage uses** that are complementary to their **community and the region**.

- ✓ **Reform local property tax** through the implementation of a State Property Tax thereby decreasing reliance on redundant big-box development, shopping centers and industrial parks along highways and interchanges.
- ✓ **Decrease sprawl** through **local zoning guidelines** and **regional impact assessment procedures** that **protect** open space **beyond municipal borders**.
- ✓ **Adopt regional planning guidelines** restraining development in rural areas and encouraging economic development at well-planned growth centers and transportation-oriented-developments (TODs).
- ✓ **Preserve rural vistas** and **restore** the environmental values of **degraded sites** through “beautification” efforts such as plantings, landscaping, and removal of overhead power lines where feasible and appropriate. Use attractive/natural buffering to **camouflage unappealing development**.
- ✓ **Create an aesthetically pleasing driving experience** while protecting the interests of Interstate right-of-way neighbors by converting State-owned property along the highway into **functional buffers** and **using attractive jersey and sound barriers**.
- ✓ **Designate portions of the Corridor as Scenic – Parkway**. Careful consideration should be given when using the “Scenic” designation to solve Corridor problems. It should be used to **solve aesthetic issues**, not traffic issues as it could actually exacerbate problems if misused.
- ✓ **Maintain journey to work travel time**. Rhode Islanders boast a relatively short commute to work time. Interstate improvements and enhancements preserve this commute quality through **transit oriented developments** and increased multi-modal transportation options.